

the classic political ads in the history of our country.

Senator MCCONNELL won that first race by a razor-thin margin, but he quickly became a leader among his Republican colleagues in the Senate in general.

Senator MCCONNELL chaired the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee during the 1998 and 2000 election cycles, served as Republican whip following the 2002 midterm elections, and now has served as the Republican leader since 2006.

I became the Democratic whip in 1998 and have been the Democratic leader since 2004. Our careers in the Senate have been very similar. During this period of time I was majority whip; he was. Back and forth, there was a lot of changing going on. So I have had a lot of interaction with Senator MCCONNELL because of our respective jobs.

It is well known that in our positions as minority and majority leaders—both as whips and as the leaders—he and I have had disagreements at various times. Behind the scenes, though, it is a different situation. In places where the cameras do not record our discussions, in private conversations, as we have to have, we are not only friends but determined partners in the legislative process. We get a lot of work done very quickly.

We just completed a meeting that took about 20 minutes, where I think the record will ultimately reflect that 20 minutes was truly well spent working out some of the problems of this Senate.

So I say, we are not only friends but determined partners in the legislative process of the Senate. That does not mean we always see eye to eye. Everyone knows that is not the case. But in the words of President-elect Obama, we are able to disagree without being disagreeable.

We respect each other's commitment to making our country stronger, and I think we have a special understanding of the unique challenges of keeping our respective caucuses together and striving toward the same goals.

At the University of Louisville, MITCH MCCONNELL has worked with faculty to create a center for public service, to educate and prepare a new generation to answer the call of public service.

A little more than a year ago, Senator MCCONNELL invited me to be a guest at the McConnell Center at the University of Louisville. After a terrific program with young and aspiring academics, he presented me with a real Louisville Slugger baseball bat, with my name inscribed on the "sweet spot." That is where these great hitters have used these bats for generations to hit the ball as far as they can and as sharply as they can.

On that day at the McConnell Center, Senator MCCONNELL and I spoke frankly and openly about the joys and difficulties of our jobs to these faculty members and these students. I, in fact,

told the students an old story about President Lincoln that has been told many times, but it is always important because he sets the standard for what politics is all about as far as getting along with people, as finely written about in some detail in the "Team of Rivals," this best-selling book. What President Lincoln said, when he was being criticized for being solicitous of members of the Confederacy, was: "Am I not destroying my enemies by making friends of them?"

Well, Senator MCCONNELL and I both understand that through friendship and mutual respect we can find common ground to achieve common goals and to reach for the common good of the American people—common ground, common goals, common good.

My wife Landra and I are pleased to call him and his lovely wife—and that, certainly, is an understatement—Elaine Chao our friends. Elaine, of course, is a national leader in her own right, having served for 8 years as our Nation's Labor Secretary and also formerly as the Director of the Peace Corps. I have such great respect for Peace Corpsmen and especially someone who is able to lead that very elite group. So I have only high regard for MITCH and Elaine. They are a wonderful couple and do so many good things for our country.

So I congratulate the Republican leader, a Kentuckian whose love of his State and its university athletic programs is well known and who now adds the distinction of being the longest serving Senator from the State of Kentucky to his long and impressive career.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

SERVICE TO KENTUCKY AND THE NATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my good friend, the majority leader, for his very kind remarks about what has now become a rather lengthy period of service in the Senate. He and I came here at roughly the same time, and, as he indicated, came to the Congress at roughly the same time. We have shared a few positions on each side of the aisle that are remarkably similar no matter which party you represent.

I noted with interest last week the photograph at the White House of the living former Presidents who had all had lunch together, and I was thinking, as the majority leader was speaking, we are in a rather limited fraternity, too—so far it is a fraternity; it will be a sorority at some point as well as a fraternity; a brotherhood or sisterhood, if you will—of people who have held these jobs which have their own unique set of challenges that are quite similar

whether you are leading the Republicans or leading the Democrats.

I wish to thank the majority leader for his very kind remarks not only about me but about my wife's public service as Secretary of Labor, which will be coming to an end at noon on January 20, along with the current administration. I also wish to express my gratitude to the majority leader for coming down to the University of Louisville back in 2007. The students enjoyed it immensely. In fact, their last magazine about the program of the center has a very large picture of the majority leader and a lengthy article including a Q and A session he had with the students.

So I am grateful for his friendship and look forward to working with him in this Congress to advance the interests of our Nation.

A few months prior to this body's convening last week, I was grateful to be chosen by my colleagues to serve once again as the Senate Republican leader.

I would also like to thank the people of Kentucky for giving me another term in the Senate. I am certainly privileged Kentucky has sent me to the Senate five times now to speak for them and for their interests, and I intend to work harder than I ever have over the next 6 years to justify their confidence.

At such a time as this, after the people of Kentucky have spoken, I cannot help but think of great Kentuckians in the past who the people of my State have selected to represent their interests.

Some we know from the history books, such as Henry Clay. Although he was Speaker of the House, Secretary of State, and a three-time Presidential candidate, we know him best as the Senator from Kentucky—the Great Compromiser who staved off civil war. Or take John Breckinridge. Elected to Congress from Virginia, he resigned that seat to move to Kentucky, which at the time was America's western frontier. A key architect of Kentucky's early State government, Breckinridge went on to serve as a Senator from Kentucky, and then as our young Nation's Attorney General under Thomas Jefferson.

Moving to modern times, I can think of other legendary Senators from Kentucky whose footsteps still echo in these halls.

Kentucky still fondly remembers the career of public service carved out by A.B. Chandler. He would be the first to tell you he made his mark not as a Senator but as a two-term Governor, or in the job he resigned the Senate to hold: commissioner of baseball. No matter what the job, with his winning personality, he was better known throughout the State by his nickname "Happy."

I am sure he would be happy to see his grandson, Congressman BEN CHANDLER, continuing his family's tradition of service to the people of Kentucky.